

ERADICATE the virus of COMMUNALISM

Even after twenty years of the attainment of political independence achieved through the transference of political power into the hands of the Congress leaders by the Britishers, the Indian people had to witness, a few days back, the saddest tragedy of the outburst of the virulent type of communal disturbances at Ranchi and Srinagar taking away the lives of hundreds of common men. A close examination of the reports published in newspapers which led to the developments of some irresistible passion, among a section of our countrymen, responsible for such a catastrophe will only reveal that any and every filthy incident is sufficient to-day to lit the spark of communal disturbance as the whole country seems for it to be highly combustible.

The virus of communalism, parochialism, regionalism etc. instead of being eradicated has permeated the entire mental make-up of the vast section of the masses disrupting the united struggles of the people against all sorts of of exploitation—social, cultural, economic and political. The crusade against the demand for making Urdu the second official language in Bihar, whatever might have been the arguments of the Hindi protagonists, has definitely stemmed from an anti-Muslim hatred. It is the concomitant evil of the psychology of "Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan" very often fostered by the so-called defenders of secularism. While we reiterate the demand to institute judicial probe into both the cases just to have a clearer picture of the roles played by different interested quarters and to severely punish those found guilty—we think it absolutely immaterial to concentrate energy on one point whether the whole incident was pre-planned or not. Some over-zealous Jan Sangh leaders came out the other day with open statements and took much strain to prove that they were not, in any way, connected with these ugly incidents and thus tried to wash off

their hands. The main point at issue, is not, in our opinion, whether the Jan Sangh as an organisation engineered the whole trouble directly or not. The crux of the problem is, no doubt, that it is the politics, pattern of propaganda and organisation of the Jan Sangh, not to speak of the role of other political parties, which is helping, both directly and indirectly, to maintain and even strengthen the communal

Editorial

frenzy among the masses. Who does not know about the communal character of the R.S.S. ? (Rastriya Sevak Sangha). Is there any iota of doubt in anybody's mind about its typical communal approach ? Is not R.S.S. the real organisation behind the Jan Sangh ? Do they not preach among their followers that the Muslims are not Indians since they go to Mecca ? Is it not their line of thinking that Hinduism is not a religion but a nation ? Was not the Jan Sangh a pioneer in the movement to impose ban on cow-slaughter ? Somebody may argue, in this connection, "how can Jan Sangh be considered a Hindu communal organisation as it gives mem-

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Our Suggestions To The U. F. On The Food Problem

(By a Staff Reporter)

There are at present 3 suggestions for solving the food problem in West Bengal. They are—

- (1) All-out State Trading in foodgrains,
- (2) State Trading of wholesale trade in foodgrains, and
- (3) Free Market operation.

Past experience has established beyond any shadow of doubt that Free Market operation will leave the people at the complete mercy of racketeers, hoarders, blackmarketeers and such other anti-social forces now in operation in the country. So, the policy of Free Market Operation cannot be accepted in the interest of the people.

State Trading of wholesale trade in foodgrains will also fail to give any relief to the people. For, all wholesalers, in that case, will pass on as retailers and carry on their clandestine business through their hired men. Recent experience also confirms this.

Thus there is only one way of solving the present food problem in our country, which has become, so to say, a permanent feature here, and

that is to introduce All-out State Trading of Foodgrains.

I. Procurement :

1. There will be All-out State Trading of Foodgrains from the coming harvesting season where private trade in foodgrains, be it wholesale or retail, should be banned.

2. Producers will be allowed to keep 12 mds. of paddy per head per year for consumption and 2 mds. of paddy per acre as seed and cultivation expenses. The rest of the produce of the producers will have to be sold by the producers to the State Government.

3. The Government, with the help of the Food and Relief Committees and Peoples Committees, will directly purchase paddy from the producers. For that purpose the Purchasing Machinery shall operate into the interior of each village. The Central Government will have to pay the entire amount required for procurement, as was in the case of F.C.I.

4. The Government will have its own godowns in every Block or Anchal.

5. Rice Mills, Flour Mills, Chira Mills, husking

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JOIN
the Mass Rally
On
22nd September
At Monument Maidan,
4 P. M.

Voice Your Demand of All-Out State Trading In Food Grains

Code of Conduct

It is well known to the politically conversant public that since the formation of the U.F. Govt. in the state, our party has been insisting on the framing up a code of conduct both for the ministers and the constituent parties and we were demanding the adoption of a constitution for the United Front along with the acceptance of certain concrete measures for the implementation of the declared 18-point programme of the Front.

The code of conduct has been adopted at last in a marathon meeting of the U.F. ; the acceptance of the other two proposals is still hanging in the air.

Though in our opinion the code now accepted does not reflect the reality, still, under the circumstances and being guided by the greater interest of developing democratic mass movements we have accepted it after recording our note of dissent. So it is necessary and we feel it our bounden duty to express our view-point in this regard.

It is a hard reality that the U.F. is not a homogeneous body, but a Front formed of a multitude of political parties not only with different trends and shades which reflect a broad spectrum of the political horizon of the country but also of parties having fundamentally opposite ideologies. And this picture of the reality should have been kept in mind while framing up a code of conduct for the Front and the Ministers.

Now among the different clauses of the accepted code a particular clause reads: 'A minister while speaking or making a statement in the public on matters of official policy, should expound the views of the Govt. as a whole. A minister is responsible for all matters decided in the cabinet and should not only not oppose but should also stand by the cabinet in public.' This is all right.

But in regard to the fundamental right of a minister at

least to let the people know his view-point, what is accepted in the code is that the ministers can only express their respective view-points when the cabinet gives the necessary permission. In our considered view, it is totally fallacious and contradictory in nature. Firstly, because of its ambiguity one is always left with an apprehension about the possibility of discrimination in the matter of allowing the ministers to express their particular view-point. Secondly when most of the ministers are partymen, how it is that, when they express their view-points in public the parties do not require any

By :

Subir Basu Ray

previous permission but the ministers belonging to those parties will have to take that ? Is it not contradictory ? Some people think that if this unfettered right to express one's view-point in public be preserved in the code of conduct then the ministers would put forward their respective view-points openly, centring which open controversy would develop among themselves which might ultimately lead to an open conflict between the ministers involved and this would jeopardise the cause of the U.F. Govt. vis-a-vis the cause of the people. But on the contrary, we think that all the ministers should declare their allegiance to the cabinet decision in public ; if the right to express what was his opinion during the time of discussion is

enjoyed by the ministers, then such a situation would never arise provided the ministers, their parties and the people could approach the question of 'unity and struggle' scientifically and objectively.

It should be borne in mind that unity never means absence of all differences. On the contrary unity presupposes the existence of such differences, as the term 'unity' connotes unity among forces or trends or political parties, all different. Different political parties with high magnitude of differences have in the past united at a particular political situation in the country to serve a common cause, the cause of the people. But even while serving this common cause, wide differences in views and attitude might be observed among these parties. Now in such circumstances would it be judicious to keep the people aloof, to keep them in dark ? On the contrary, any reasonable man would say that the people should be given proper scope to make themselves well conversant with the views of the different ministers, and the political stands of different parties. If the parties of the U.F. consider themselves united to serve the peoples' cause, then the people should be always kept well acquainted with their respected views, so that they could really assess the actual position and the stand of each party and they could get proper scope to judge what is right and what is wrong. Otherwise the talk of participation of the people in the Govt.—the declared pledge of the Front—would become a mere verbosity.

By unity we mean 'unity with struggle' i.e. different political parties with different political views will have to struggle constantly to arrive at unity constantly, and this is true even while conducting the functioning of the U.F. Government.

It should be borne in

mind that when differences of opinion appear among the different parties and ministers in the Front, the purpose of the united struggle is not only to resolve the differences among themselves but also to educate the masses, rank and file and the leaders concerned. So, under any circumstances it is not proper to keep the struggle restricted to the parties and the ministers in the U.F. the struggle should be made open to the public. It is only through this process that we will be able to make the people participate in the struggle, which will strengthen the Front and a greater unity will result. It is only through an active and healthy struggle among ourselves (including the people) that we will be able to reach a correct decision ; then we will be able to develop political consciousness among the masses which is the only corner-stone for organising an all-out democratic struggle in the country in the right direction. From the view point of such a sense of unity, any form of ventilation or the open publicity of a constructive suggestion of a particular minister or any constructive criticism of the faulty approach of any other minister ought not to be considered as a disruptive act by others.

Those who want to keep all discussions regarding the differences between the ministers confined only within the cabinet, but do not want to make known the stands of the different ministers to the people, are actually showing disregard to the people who have performed a great task by making possible the formation of the U.F. ministry after toppling down the twenty-year old Congress misrule in the state. Not only that. From our previous experiences we have seen that even the proceedings of secret closed-door meetings and the decisions

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All-Out State Trading— The Only Solution

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machines etc. which are connected with production of these articles and trade in foodgrains should be nationalised or their management and control should be taken over by the Government. They shall be supplied paddy by the Government which they will mill on commission fixed by the Government.

6. During the period of procurement there should be district-wise cordon. If necessary, cordoning on subdivision or thana basis may be enforced.

7. The procurement prices of paddy per maund should be from Rs. 24/- to Rs. 27/- according to the quality of paddy.

II. Supply from the Centre :

1. The Central Government should supply at least 3,00,000 tons of rice and 18,00,000 tons of wheat besides supplying the quantity of wheat necessary for the bakeries, during the coming year, monthly supply being equally distributed.

III. Distribution :

All persons except the producers, who will be allowed to retain required quantity of paddy or rice necessary for their family consumption, shall be supplied with ration.

2. For the present the total quantity of ration in rice and wheat should be 2700 grammes. per head per week. In case of manual labourers this amount should be augmented by 600 gms. more. The amount of rice should be at least 1,500 gms. which may be increased, if the procured amount of paddy permits it.

3. The price of rice should not exceed Re. 1 per kg. and that of wheat 0.62 per Kg.

4. If subsidy is necessary for selling rice and wheat at these prices, that should be given.

5. Ration should be supplied through Ration Shops, Modified Ration Shops, Co-operative Stores and Socie-

ties. Small traders not dealing in foodgrains may be appointed as sellers in order to avoid unemployment of such traders.

IV. Other Commodities :

Steps may be taken to supply other essential articles of daily consumption like dal, sugar, chira, muri, edible oil, potato and egg but their supply by the Government should not be statutorily binding.

V. Penal Measures :

Those who will violate any provision necessary for making All-out State Trading a success or carry on private trade in food grains shall be severely punished.

Assam Bandh

Congratulating the people of Assam for successfully observing the "Assam Bandh" on 11th September, '67 on behalf of the "Samjukta Andolan Parishad", Comrades Ashit Bhattacharya (S.U.C.), Phani Bara (C.P.I.) Achintya Bhattacharya (C.P.I. M.), Khagen Barua (R.C.P.) and Pares Barua (R.S.P.) have issued an appeal to the people of Assam to carry on their struggle further until their demands are conceded. In the appeal it has been mentioned that inspite of serious resentment of the people against the policies pursued by the Congress Government during the last six months after the general elections there is still no indication of any change of these policies. In fact the common people of Assam are groaning under the capitalist exploitation and have been hard hit by the ever-soaring prices of the essential commodities, non-availability of the food-staff, retrenchment of workers and employees due to econo-

Code of conduct

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taken in those meetings leak out to the press in a clandestine way. Now one may ask a simple question—how can it happen if none of the participants of the meeting are involved in this nefarious game? Under the circumstances is it not preferable that the things be made straight and fair?

There are some who clamour that if the differences among the ministers of the Front are exposed to the people at large, then the image of the U.F. will be tarnished. We ask them: do they intend to create an image of the U.F. in the people's mind by concealing truth from them? Will it not aggravate the differences between the ministers and the parties in the U.F. which will ultimately lead the U.F. ministry to disaster? On the contrary, we hold the view that not by concealing truths from the people but only by making them acquainted with the actual state of things going on in the U.F. and the cabinet that the struggle for unity of the people and of the different parties can be strengthened.

Moreover, we ask them again, will it not create a better image of the U.F. Govt. in the peoples' mind if the people are offered full opportunity to note that inspite of severe differences and struggles between ourselves we have been able to function unitedly to uphold the cause of the people?

mic recession in general and specific industrial slump of Assam in particular.

Under the circumstances the Parishad was left with no other alternative but to launch a strong, organised and broad-based movement of the people. The Parishad therefore decided to observe 11th September as "Assam Bandh" day in order to focuss the genuine grievances of the people. The success of the "Assam Bandh" has amply demonstrated the people's will to further carry on their just struggle.

Another important point involved here which we want to impress upon the other constituents and the public is that, in a given conjuncture, being guided by the overall interest of the people, it is one thing to abide by the united decisions for carrying out united programmes of actions but it is altogether different to surrender the right to vindicate one's opinion to the public. So any sensible man would say that, every minister and every party should at least enjoy the right to make the people conversant with the actual state of affairs and thereby mobilise public opinion in favour their respective stands.

Astonishingly we note that even some parties who claim to be Marxist-Leninist are pursuing a wrong policy on this vital issue. Of course, this is not a new phenomenon. On every occasion in the past, we have observed that on the question of developing united struggle they could never approach the issue objectively. By unity they mean negation of struggle and if their voice is not echoed they even do not hesitate to gag the voice of others, and this they do in the name of unity. Again when they talk of struggle, they altogether negate the possibility of arriving at unity at any time under any circumstances. This is an absolutely unscientific approach to the question of unity and struggle. Lastly after a thorough and critical review of the code accepted by the Front we are constrained to say that in regard to the conduct of the ministers it does not reflect any objective and scientific understanding of the nature of the struggle in which the leaders and the constituent parties are involved in order to arrive at unity for the greater interest of the people.

Politically A Nation Culturally A Conglomeration of Nationalities Religions etc.

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bership even to the Muslims?" Very recently the Jan Sangh is reported to have given membership to probably one or two Muslims. This cannot be any testimony to their non-communal claim. On the contrary, it is evident that it is intended absolutely to cover their communal face. Citing this example they will hardly be successful to mislead the public opinion. They can at best attempt to confuse the public by their so-called non-communalism but that will fail to reflect the reality. The venom of communalism has definitely found a very deep-rooted shelter in the ideological approach of the Jan Sangh.

In India things have come to such a pass as if the whole country is going to turn the face backward in the pages of history. Secularism, independence, democracy and other lofty principles of one day progressive bourgeoisie are given today absolutely distorted and degraded interpretations being guided by the petty vested interests of the capitalist class. The seed of parochialism has been not only sown but has also been allowed to flourish and grow in the soil of revivalism and blind fanaticism. Such being the mental make-up of the vast majority of the people the so-called big left political parties who swear by socialism and communism have been found to fail miserably in discharging their duties. These left parties have never conducted any ideological and cultural struggle against these trends of communalism, parochialism etc. On the contrary, they simply remain satisfied by launching so-called battles against the Jan Sangh and other allied communal forces only in the political plane. We consider that it is impossible to eradicate this deep-seated virus of communalism from our social and cultural life unless we undertake

the painstaking task of finding the root-cause of the trouble scientifically and take upon our shoulder the responsibility of organising an all-out battle—ideological, cultural and political.

The interest of our people calls for a thorough scientific probe into the causes of the dangerous social malady of communal violence and the acceptance of correct remedies for it. One should, in this connection, go back to examine the complexities that obstructed the process of formation of the Indian nation. There is no denying the fact that although we have attained nationhood politically but culturally we are still distracted by differences in religion, caste, race, language, psychological make-up and what not. The reason entirely lies in the weakness of the leadership that was at the helm of our national struggle for independence. At a time when capitalism lost its progressive character and became absolutely decadent the Indian bourgeoisie carrying with it the international reactionary trend—was stirred into movement against the British imperialism. Secondly, we cannot forget for a moment that the Indian bourgeoisie grew and developed under the domination of foreign finance capital which restricted its growth and was responsible for its stunted development. Thirdly, like all colonial bourgeoisie in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution, Indian bourgeoisie was mortally afraid of revolutionary mass struggle against imperialism. For, it apprehended that revolutionary struggle by the Indian people for national liberation, if successful, would not only end imperialist rule in our country, but also, along with it, remove the national bourgeoisie from the leadership of the struggle.

Antagonism with imperia-

lism on the one hand and the fear-complex of revolution on the other made the nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie maintain a reformist oppositional role against imperialism. Its role against feudalism was also equally compromising. The result of this compromise was that the Indian bourgeoisie could not and did not carry out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions essential for the democratisation of the society and complete the merger of different communities professing different religions into a nation. However much some of our nationalist historians may claim to the contrary, it is a hard fact that in the pre-British era India had never been a political whole. In fact we had at that time a large number of separate principalities. It was only during the centralised British administration that India became a political whole, which created, step by step, the material condition, so long absent, for the emergence of modern all-India concept. During the centralised British administration of India associated with the emergence of a national market and inter-course of trade and commerce on an all-India basis and between the people and in the course of the Indian people's fight for national independence against the imperialists, the different nationalities in India speaking different languages and different communities professing different religions, were in the process of merging together and forming a nation. Had the leadership of this national movement in our country been in the hands of the working class, it would have been possible to not only eliminate imperialism completely but also take the country along the non-capitalist path of development and solve the national, communal, racial

question, once for all, as it has been done in China or Soviet Union. But unfortunately the leadership of the nationalist movement lay in the hands of the national bourgeoisie. And this Indian nationalist leadership not only did not try to free the Indian masses from the bondage of religion and democratize the society, by carrying out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions, it, on the contrary, took up religion as a vehicle of propagating nationalistic ideas. Indian nationalism, therefore, was basically religion-oriented. Since historically the leadership of the freedom struggle was mainly in the hands of the Hindus—the Indian nationalism took the character of "Hindu nationalism." Not only that; being led by those belonging to caste Hindu community it was better to call it a "Caste Hindu nationalism." Thus the religion-oriented nationalism of India expressed itself in the form of Hindu religious revivalism. When the prerequisite for the development of a nation was, among others, real integration, a fusion in the cultural field—this sectarian complex of Indian nationalism was responsible for the failure of the fusion of different religious communities into a nation. Real unification of the people differing in religion, caste, race etc into a homogeneous national whole can never be achieved by lending support to religious customs, the force that impedes the process of unification. This is the main reason why India has not been able to fight out the vicious virus of communalism, casteism, racialism and all sorts of parochial bent of mind.

Even after the attainment of political freedom we find that the Congress is paying lip service to secularism. To what stage has this secular-

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On the Proposed Mid-Term Election in West Bengal

Some quarters particularly the leaders of C.P.I. (M) tried in vain to agitate the mind of the people by raising the question of mid-term election. The leaders of C.P.I. (M) in their statements, speeches and writings have made it amply clear that they are heading for a mid-term election and trying to pursue others on to their own line. After the recent C.C. meeting at Madurai it seems, that they have at least abandoned open propaganda in this regard, still when the question is raised and much has been spoken on it we feel it our bounden duty to examine the question thoroughly. A closer analysis of the whole set of arguments advanced by the protagonists actually boils down to the following two points.

(1) That the defection of some members from the United Front Government and their joining with the Congress has seriously endangered the stability of the present government. Since there is a very slender majority in the present Assembly such defection would possibly alter the government. As such a stable majority of the left forces should be achieved through another election. A suggestion has been put forward in this regard by Sri Promode Dasgupta, W. B. Secretary of the C.P.I. (M) that the Chief Minister should request the Governor to hold the mid-term election. There is no reason why the Governor should not agree as even in England there is an instance that on being requested by the Labour Party which had only a majority of 3 or 4 members in the Parliament, the Queen of England gave her consent to hold another election in order to form a stable government.

(2) That there have been obstructions from certain constituent parties (presumably they might have meant the parties like Bangla Congress, Forward Bloc, P.S.P., S.S.P.; etc., but these, they have not categorically mentioned) in implementing the 18-point programme of the United Front. The role of these parties inside the U. F. Govt. is the main cause of failure on certain vital fields like food, education, land and land revenue etc. A gentleman Mr.

Kranti Sen in his 'Letter from Calcutta' published in Mainstream August 5, 1967 has indicated in this regard that "One can only hope that if a mid-term election is ultimately forced on the people of West-Bengal, the communists would take a lesson from their past mistake and try to form a broad united front of genuinely left and democratic parties. It is time mere non-congressism ceased to be a criterion for a progressive political party."

As for the first question of defection it is said that the stability of the present government is endangered due to it. It is only through the mid-term election that a stable government can be achieved. But who will constitute that government? The leaders of C.P.I. (M) are not saying it clearly or publicly. It is known that there have been defections from Bangla Congress—a constituent party of the U. F. Govt.. But could it not be conceived beforehand that there would be defections of members in this party from the U. F. Govt., as this party itself, has very little difference with the Congress? Then who was responsible to bring them in? Who gave them the opportunity to be recognised as a left force in this state? Are not the leaders of C.P.I. (M) themselves to blame for it? So now, when they talk of a stable government, without mentioning publicly the parties they would ally with, how can the possibility of defection be checked and stability attained,

if these same forces are relied upon and joined as constituents of the left front? The protagonists of mid-term election must clearly announce the name of the parties they seek to combine. Besides, as to the defection itself, how can it be checked, when most of the parties while sponsoring a candidate do not follow any decorum or principle of selection? They nominate such candidates on their election tickets who are not at all tested in the democratic movements. Then without adding any positive step to guard it in future how can these advocates prevent defections and bring about a stable government? What suggestion they have made regarding the principle of selecting a candidate, which has to be followed by all the parties comprising the left front? We find none such suggestions even now. Rather we have observed that they did not support our proposal in this regard during the last general elections with a view to guard defection by choosing only the acknowledged fighters in

By
Biplab Sen

democratic movements. The person eligible to be a candidate shall fulfil the following conditions:

(1) That the person did never oppose any previous democratic mass movement.

(2) that he did not ever directly or indirectly indulge himself in giving a hand to the reactionary vested circle against any legitimate democratic mass movement.

(3) that he has firmly established his integrity and honesty before the people.

Regarding the second issue that there were obstruction from certain constituent parties who are creating difficulties in implementing the 18-point programme, we would like to ask, was it unapprehended at the beginning of the formation of the U.F. Govt? When the forces like Bangla Congress,

P.S.P., S.S.P., and some others gave ample evidence that they do not differ from Congress essentially and when some of them are often found to be in position even worse than Congress on some issues, it was obvious then that they would oppose the progressive policies of the United Front? Are not the big left parties mainly the C.P.I. (M) and C.P.I. responsible for the fact that it was only due to them that these forces like Bangla Congress and others managed to smuggle into the rank of leftists? It is indeed queer to lament now when they themselves had done the mischief. We need not discuss such details as to what happened during the last general elections—and how to the detriment of the interest of the people the 'C.P.I. (M)' formed an alliance with S.S.P., the most rabid pro-American force and the stoutest defender of the 'Free World' in this state. Neither do we like to dwell at length on the very sad and despicable role of C.P.I. which like its counterpart, did not hesitate to counterpose another front comprising the pseudo-left forces and individuals, against the ULF and thereby helped disruption of the left support of the people. In this connection it will not be out of place to mention that our party in regard to the formation of the U.F. before the last general elections categorically suggested that a genuine left united front should be built up on a clear-cut left democratic programme, and if necessary an electoral adjustment may be made with other non-Congress forces without jeopardising the interest of any of the constituent parties of the United Left Front to ensure the defeat of the Congress. Due to the short memory of the people, it is worthwhile to mention that it was the leaders of C.P.I. (M) in league with the leaders of S.S.P. who had foiled all

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Implement The Recommendation Of The Coal Wage Board

Four lakhs coal mining workers in India are much agitated and observed 28th August throughout Coal Industry as Demands Day by holding mass demonstration and decided to stop work at the refusal of the Employers to implement the Wage Board recommendations in full. A grave situation, thus, has been created in the mining belt. Let us therefore discuss the genesis of Coal Wage Board and its recommendations.

The Wage Board for the Coal Mining Industry set up in 1962 submitted its recommendations to the Govt. of India after five years. And this long time of 5 years have been taken by the Wage Board only to come to this conclusion that—"the cost of living has gone up." What a great genius! Obviously a question arises—who had been the members of this Wage Board? The Chairman of the Board has been Sri Salim M. Merchant—a permanent Presiding officer of Central Govt. Industrial Tribunal and workers representatives have been Sri Kanti Mehta (INTUC), Dr. Mrs. Maitreyee Bose (INTUC) and Sri Deven Sen (H.M.S.) besides the Employers representatives. It is to be remembered that A.I.T.U.C. and U.T.U.C. were omitted although they represent substantial section of coal workers whereas some of the members of the Board representing workers had almost no connection with coal trade unions.

The U.T.U.C. (Dharmatalla) unions in the coal industry protested to its such formation and also expressed its disavowal to Wage Board as such on principle.

However, the Wage Board which was appointed by the Govt. of India by its notification dated 10th August, 1962 submitted its report before the Central Govt. only on 13th February, 1967. And all these long 5 years the coal workers

had to wait with patience. The Central Govt. again in its turn took 6 months to declare its acceptance and by its resolution dated 21st July 1967 the Central Labour Ministry declared that *part of the report has been accepted by the Union Govt.* Here there is another tragic drama—the recommendations which the Board made were neither spectacular nor even reasonably adequate—rather on close scrutiny it will be revealed that even monetary wages, leaving aside real wages, has not

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been increased much and in case of minimum wages it is rather almost same as before—that aspect however is being dealt in due course below. Yet the Govt. have not accepted all the decisions of the Wage Board.

The Government divided the recommendations into two parts—unanimous and non-unanimous and gave its official approval to only a *part of the unanimous* recommendations and thereby some of the important unanimous decisions also have not been accepted, not to speak of the majority decisions. And in this process important recommendations—like that of Gratuity, Leave with Pay benefits etc. are omitted.

It will not be out of place to mention here that at the early stage of the formation of the Board, Sri Gulzar

rail Nanda, the then Labour Minister, once observed in the Parliament that the Govt. believed in the principle of accepting only unanimous recommendations of the Wage Boards. The Employers never missed the hint and has utilised it to their advantage to the maximum. Throughout the proceedings of the Board it has been noticed that almost on each point, Sri Worah, Employers representative, has recorded his dissent—sometime dissent for dissent's sake alone and thereby was able to make most of the report non-unanimous. His tactics had been so low that—on certain items agreeing to main clause and the sub-clauses thereunder he noted his dissent only to the last sub-clause and thereby was able to frustrate the whole item including the agreed clause with sub-clauses.

The coal kings are not yet satisfied. They have refused to implement even those parts of the recommendations declared by the Govt. to be effective from 15th August, 1967. The Board recommended that it should be made effective from 1st January 1967 and the Govt. of India has changed it to 15th August 1967 and thereby allowing the Employers to grab 7½ months due increased wages of the workers.

The Employers want increase in coal price first; then they would consider the question of implementation—some time back the coal employers prayed before Tariff Commission that coal industry should be decontrolled and now when the Govt. has decontrolled the industry these favourite Coal Kings of the Congress Govt. are expressing disavowal to that and asking for increase in price first.

It is, therefore, clear that a great conspiracy has been hatched by the Foreign and Indian Coal Monopolists with Ministers and officials of the Central Congress Govt. to continue to deprive the coal workers from even their minimum requirements. In brief it comes to this that—

(1) Major part of the recommendations has been rejected.

(2) Date of giving effect to recommendations has been changed from 1st January to 15th August 1967 and,

(3) the employers are not willing to implement the recommendations.

The attitude of the Union Labour Ministry in respect of implementation of the Board recommendations are quite clear from the resolution of the Govt. adopted on 21st July 1967 which was placed on the table of the Parliament on 24-7-67 by Sri Joysukhalall Hathi, the Union Labour Minister who also made a statement before the House thereon. In para 7 of the said resolution in connection with implementation it has been said that,

"In view of Government's recent decision to decontrol coal prices, it has been represented that *it will take some time for employers to make the necessary readjustments to enable them to implement the recommendation.* Employers and workers have generally agreed to enter into bipartite talks in this connection *regarding the phasing of the disbursement of additional benefits in the initial period whenever employers may have such difficulties.* The Govt. **would** commend holding of such talks between the parties with a view to arriving at *mutually acceptable arrangements.*"

Again the Labour Minister gives a long rope in the hands of the coal kings to bypass Wage Board recommendations—at least for some time, and not only this, he even refers to a "mutually acceptable arrangement" meaning thereby even some thing short of what the Govt. has accepted. Is it not openly advocating the cause of the employers? The Central Govt., thus, has shirked its responsibility of getting the recommendations implemented and left the whole issue at the mercy of the un-willing employers.

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Coal Wage Board

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Till the writing of this article the employers have declared their willingness to implement the recommendations. The series of Tripartite meetings at the instance of Sri Hathi including the last one on 22-8-67 at Delhi has not borne any fruit. Although the employers have already increased the price of coal from Rs. 4/- to Rs. 7-50. depending upon the quality and grade of coal with effect from 1st Sept. '67. The Govt., Railways and Steel Industry, being the bulk purchaser, the coal magnates are in hot bargain with the Govt.

It must be remembered that only the U.T.U.C. (Dharamtalla)—affiliated Unions have protested against and denied the necessity of price increase of coal, other central T.U. Organisations preferred to remain silent on this question.

What a queer logic of the employers—wage has been fixed based on pre-1962 price index and the then price of coal, but before implementing that in 1967 they require fresh price increase whereas all these years they have got regular increase in price by the Govt. Coal being a controlled industry so long, the Govt. has every time increased the selling price of coal whenever demanded by the employers for every interim wage increase granted by the Wage Board like 0.37 P. per day with effect from 1st March 1963 and second 0.19 P. per day with effect from 1st January 1965 the Govt. raised the selling price of coal by 0.82 P. per ton in the first instance and by 0.41 P. per ton in the second. Similar increase in sale price was granted after 1956 wage revision. Hence coal employers have always been in the greater margin of profit.

The first wage fixation (Industry wise) took place in 1947 after series of strikes

in the Jharia-field—which was known as Conciliation Board Award, the second in 1956-57 (by the All India Colliery Tribunal—known as Mazumdar Award and subsequently modified by the Appellate Tribunal known as Zeegibhoy Award) and the third in 1967 by this Wage Board, implementation of which is yet to be achieved. This is unheard of in any other organised industry in the country. The coal workers have no casual leave—although, it is recognised that work in coal mines is most hazardous and strenuous, it is universally accepted that workers here should get more rest than others, 1956-57 Award gave 7 days paid holidays a year and Mines Act govern leave rules which are linked with attendance. Coal workers have no gratuity, nor retirement benefit. In matter of sickness benefits they are at disadvantage compared to the factory workers. The undue over emphasis laid on the link between wages and earnings (including Bonus under Coal Mines Bonus Scheme) and attendances have left them open to manipulation by unscrupulous owners. The contract system are robbing them white. There had been no profit Bonus in the coal industry so long. Strikes have been virtually banned by declaring the industry as Public Utility service and making provision in Coal Mines Bonus Scheme that participation in illegal strike will dis-entitle otherwise eligible workers from Bonus Leave Pay etc.

In this situation, the coal workers are left with only alternative—that is to carry on determined massive struggle. The struggle of the coal workers will have to be two-pronged—acceptance by Govt. of the whole recommendations of the Wage Board irrespective of unanimous or majority decisions and to make it effective

from 1st January, 1967, as recommended by the Wage Board. The Govt. should not be allowed to give undue concessions to the employers. And thirdly, for taking firm stand for implementation and for formation of effective implementation machinery taking representatives from all T.U. Organisations recognised or not. The other face of the struggle is directly against the employers—but not singly, against the whole industry at a time. The workers must remember that coal employers to-day are more organised in their Association—they are appearing with one face, they are bargaining from advantageous position—they have got lots of friends in the government and inside the Parliament and hence workers must meet the situation courageously and united action is the need of the hour.

It is a matter of hope that unions in coal industry belonging to U.T.U.C. (both groups), H.M.S. and A.I.T.U.C. with some independent unions have already forged a joint Front. Already two meetings of the representatives of all such unions have taken place at Dhanbad. The INTUC, although joined the first meeting, has withdrawn its participation from the second, for reasons best known to them. The last meeting which took place on 14th August at Dhanbad Town Hall was attended by representatives from Singareni field of Andhra, N.C.D.C. field of Orissa, Hazaribagh field, Jharia field and Raniganj field of West Bengal. This meeting has adopted the proposal first initiated by Com. Pritish Chanda of United Federation of Indian Miners and U.T.U.C. (Dharmatalla) that—

(1) Workers throughout the Industry should organise massive demonstrations on August 28th—demonstration does not preclude Gherao.

(2) All India Token Strike for a day—on 18th September.

(3) If the recommendations of the Wage Board are

still not implemented - strike all over the industry for indefinite period.

Workers should remember that in West Bengal and Bihar the major coal producing areas—there are no more Congress Govts.—the United Front Govts. are morally bound to help and protect workers' legitimate movement. The West Bengal Labour Minister, Com. Subodh Banerjee has assured the coal workers of his support; the Bihar Labour Minister, Sri Bâswan Singh also has expressed his sympathy with the workers' cause. Let the workers rightly take due advantage of this new political background in West Bengal and Bihar.

Latest News :

On 28th August, 1967 coal workers in all Mining belts of India have observed their Demands Day. 15 thousand coal workers have demonstrated at Dhanbad under the auspices of U. T. U. C. (Dharmatalla) H. M. S. and A. I. T. U. C. and submitted a Memorandum to R.L.C., Dhanbad demanding full and immediate implementation of Board's recommendations.

Mid-Term Election

(Continued from page 5)

attempts for the formation of such a front, on the plea that the differences are such among the left parties that such a front is not practically feasible. Since we know this history, and also cannot forget their political games and somersaults, one would like to ask the advocates of mid-term election to pledge publicly that they would not combine or attempt to ally with the reactionary non-left forces under any sort of pretext or exigency whatsoever, since their contention is that the U.F. shall cease to be simply non-Congress in approach.

Another point has to be thoroughly examined before the issue of mid-term election can be justified to the people. Is it not a fact that the leaders

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Lessons of Ranchi and Srinagar

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rism come in practice? What does secularism actually mean? To quote Com. Shibdas Ghosh, the teacher and leader of our party, "Truly speaking, secularism means non-recognition of any supernatural entity. As such, in a democratic society secularism presupposes that both the believers and non-believers shall enjoy equal right to profess their respective views. In other words, those who believe in religion will have full freedom of faith while those who do not have faith in religion but believe in human values and ethics also will have the same freedom. The attitude of the State towards religion will be that it will neither encourage religious faith nor obstruct it. This is the correct attitude. Secularism never means that the Government will lend its support equally to all religious faiths; on the contrary it means that religion will have no relation with the State and no bearing in politics, economics and ethics. Religion will be just a personal affair of faith. But the Congress has been able to create a peculiar conception about secularism which implies equal encouragement for all religious faiths. In the circumstances, what else can we expect except whipping up of religious fanaticism? If secularism means equal encouragement for all religions, have the protagonists of this idea even thought that, then the difference between Pakistan and India objectively boils down to this that the former is an Islamic theocratic State while the latter a multi-theocratic State? Have those persons who are known as leftist or communist voiced any word of protest against this idea and mental make-up? They are, instead, found frequently to pay lip service to secularism on the one hand and to encourage at the same time the religious mindedness of the people directly or indirectly for their petty sectarian interest. It is one thing not to injure anybody's religious feeling, it is quite a different thing to encourage the religious susceptibility of another." (From a speech delivered by Com. Shibdas Ghosh on 24th April 1967.) On the same occasion Com. Ghosh elaborated this point further. He observed, "Religion must not be dragged into politics, social movement and certainly not in State affairs.....Have the left leaders even thought seriously why is the Jan Sangh flourishing in Delhi, Northern and Central India? I say, under prevailing low level of consciousness in democratic move-

ment it cannot but flourish. What are the leftist parties and their leaders doing there? The Jan Sangh has captured all the seats in Delhi notwithstanding the fact that the communist party of India has its head quarters and the big bosses of the S.S.P. live there. Huge offices are being maintained by the big left parties at Delhi. Why and how then the Jan Sangh succeeds in winning over the masses of the people on to its side and capturing all the seats? What else can you expect when the leftists too are helping parochialism to gain in strength? Whether they are doing it knowingly or unknowingly does not matter—the result is the same, parochialism is gaining in strength. We shall fight Jan Sangh only in the political arena but leave the unfinished tasks of social and cultural revolutions unaccomplished—this outlook will not help us in anyway.....The bourgeois national leaders of India did not perform these tasks as they made compromise with feudalism. But those who claim to be leftists, progressives and communists, ought to have taken up these tasks. But they also did not care to do. The growth and development of parochialism cannot be resisted if these tasks are not taken up for completion."

This is a great task no doubt. We appeal to all the democratic minded people of our country to give a serious thought to this analysis of ours and to take the initiative for launching an uncompromising struggle to complete the unaccomplished tasks of social and cultural revolutions which is long overdue in our country.

To fulfil these tasks all sections of the exploited people belonging to different social strata should unitedly fight against all sorts of exploitation, oppression and injustice on the one hand and should on the other incorporate the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the programme of day to day democratic movement of the people so that a country-wide broad-based movement can be launched for its completion.

On Proposed Mid-Term Election

(Continued from page 7)

of C.P.I. (M) who are now urging for a fresh election, are not courageously pursuing the declared principle that the U.F. ministry shall not only not suppress but actively encourage the democratic mass movements in the state? Can they really deny that they have always submitted to the pressure of the majority to retrograde from the professed stand of the U.F. Ministry? Who supported the police action in Naxalbari? What concrete measures have been suggested by the leaders of C.P.I. (M) to check the eviction of peasants or to restore Benam land and distribute it to the poor and landless peasants? Besides who suggested the price support policy that has actually worsened the food situation and given a free hand to the wholesale traders, the hoarders, the black-marketeers to corner the entire marketable surplus and speculate on foodgrains? When even the forces like P.S.P., R.S.P., Forward Bloc etc. ultimately could agree to our proposal for an all-out State Trading and abolition of private trade in foodgrains and when even the Food Department has suggested that such a machinery for all-out State Trading can be established without any difficulty what is preventing the leaders of C.P.I. (M) and others not to accept our proposal? Contrarily, their proposal for only wholesale State Trading allowing the private trade in retail business, only helps the blackmarketeers and wholesalers to transform themselves overnight into retailers who can very easily continue their clandestine business on foodgrains as before. Apart from the food front, from what has come out in public it is revealed, that these advocates have themselves given consent that the police shall interfere in labour disputes on complaints. It thereby weakened the democratic movement in this field, the only field where the declared policy that the 'police shall not interfere in legitimate democratic movement' was being consistently pursued, even under the tremendous pressure exerted by the reactionary circle the press, the bureaucracy, and also a section of the ministry itself. What attempts have been made by the ministers belonging to this group advocating fresh election to curb bureaucracy, restrain police, fight out corruption from the administration, tackle the food situation etc? What prevents them to remain firm on the declared

line of the U.F. and staunchly defend it even now, within and outside the cabinet?

Observing what the leaders of C.P.I. (M) and most of the other left parties have performed before the election in regard to the formation of a genuinely united left front and judging their performances even after the occupation of the office of the Govt. it is difficult to convince the people the justifiability of the mid-term election. Under the circumstances what else can it be other than the petty sectarian interest of increasing their party strength in the legislature through this mid-term election on the one hand, and on the other to find out a way to bring about a unity amongst its conflicting divergent groups within the party, through the election fever, which in the recent period has assumed an unprecedented dimension in their newly formed party life? Presumably it is hoped that, only through another election these factional activities within the party can be checked, because at election times it becomes easy on the part of the leadership to raise the slogan effectively that the unity of the party must be maintained at all cost and whatever may be the differences should be set aside at this crucial moment. A point may be asked, if C.P.I. (M) is really interested to fight for another election for upholding the cause of the people, which, it says, it is unable to do now, why is it not withdrawing its support to the U.F. Government which will automatically lead to another election? Is it afraid to lose its popularity of the people, who are still behind this U.F. Government notwithstanding all its grievous failures in many fronts, because people may not forgive them if they wreck this government? What prompts them to behave in such a dubious way then? It is firstly to pass on the blame of downfall of the U.F. Govt. if it ever happens, on the shoulders of the other constituents of the United Front. Secondly it at the same time wants to usurp the credit, that the U.F. Govt. may earn for some of its progressive policies and acts, while fighting the mid-term election. Does not this behaviour simply expose their petty sectarianism and narrow party politics?

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